

2 ESTRUCTURA

2.3 Reflexive verbs

- In a reflexive construction, the subject of the verb both performs and receives the action. Reflexive verbs (**verbos reflexivos**) always use reflexive pronouns (**me, te, se, nos, os, se**).



Reflexive verbs

Elena **se lava** la cara.



Non-reflexive verb

Elena **lava** los platos.

Reflexive verbs

lavarse *to wash (oneself)*

yo

me lavo

tú

te lavas

Ud./él/ella

se lava

nosotros/as

nos lavamos

vosotros/as

os laváis

Uds./ellos/ellas

se lavan

2.3 Reflexive verbs

- Many of the verbs used to describe daily routines and personal care are reflexive.

acostarse (o:ue) *to go to bed*

afeitarse *to shave*

bañarse *to take a bath*

cepillarse *to brush (hair/teeth)*

despertarse (e:ie) *to wake up*

dormirse (o:ue) *to go to sleep*

ducharse *to take a shower*

lavarse *to wash (oneself)*

levantarse *to get up*

maquillarse *to put on makeup*

peinarse *to comb (one's hair)*

ponerse *to put on (clothing)*

secarse *to dry off*

quitarse *to take off (clothing)*

vestirse (e:i) *to get dressed*

2.3 Reflexive verbs

- In Spanish, most transitive verbs can also be used as reflexive verbs to indicate that the subject performs the action to or for himself or herself.

Félix **divirtió** a los invitados con sus chistes.
Félix amused the guests with his jokes.

Félix **se divirtió** en la fiesta.
Félix had fun at the party.

Ana **acostó** a los gemelos antes de las nueve.
Ana put the twins to bed before nine.

Ana **se acostó** muy tarde.
Ana went to bed very late.

2.3 Reflexive verbs

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A transitive verb is one that takes a direct object.

Mariela compró dos boletos.

Mariela bought two tickets.

Johnny contó un chiste.

Johnny told a joke.

2.3 Reflexive verbs

- Many verbs change meaning when they are used with a reflexive pronoun.

aburrir *to bore*

acordar (o:ue) *to agree*

comer *to eat*

dormir (o:ue) *to sleep*

ir *to go*

llevar *to carry*

mudar *to change*

parecer *to seem*

poner *to put*

quitar *to take away*

aburrirse *to get bored*

acordarse (de) (o:ue) *to remember*

comerse *to eat up*

dormirse (o:ue) *to fall asleep*

irse (de) *to go away (from)*

llevarse *to carry away*

mudarse *to move (change residence)*

parecerse (a) *to resemble; to look like*

ponerse *to put on (clothing)*

quitarse *to take off (clothing)*

2.3 Reflexive verbs

- Some Spanish verbs and expressions are used in the reflexive even though their English equivalents may not be. Many of these are followed by the prepositions **a**, **de**, and **en**.

acercarse (a) *to approach*

arrepentirse (de) (e:ie) *to repent*

atreverse (a) *to dare (to)*

convertirse (en) (e:ie) *to become*

darse cuenta (de) *to realize*

enterarse (de) *to find out (about)*

fijarse (en) *to take notice (of)*

morirse (de) (o:ue) *to die (of)*

olvidarse (de) *to forget (about)*

preocuparse (por) *to worry (about)*

quejarse (de) *to complain (about)*

sorprenderse (de) *to be surprised (about)*

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- *To get or to become* is frequently expressed in Spanish by the reflexive verb **ponerse** + *[adjective]*.

Pilar **se pone** muy nerviosa antes del torneo.
Pilar gets very nervous before the tournament.

Si no duermo bien, **me pongo insoportable**.
If I don't sleep well, I become unbearable.

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¡ATENCIÓN!

Hacerse and **volverse** can also mean *to become*.

Se ha hecho cantante.
He has become a singer.

¿**Te has vuelto** loco/a?
Have you gone mad?

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- In the plural, reflexive verbs can express reciprocal actions done *to one another*.

Los dos equipos **se saludan** antes de comenzar el partido.
The two teams greet each other at the start of the game.

¡Los entrenadores **se están peleando** otra vez!
The coaches are fighting again!

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- The reflexive pronoun precedes the direct object pronoun when they are used together in a sentence.

¿**Te** comiste el pastel?

Did you eat the whole cake?

Sí, **me lo** comí.

Yes, I ate it all up.

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¡ATENCIÓN!

When used with infinitives and present participles, reflexive pronouns follow the same rules of placement as object pronouns. See **2.1**, pp. 54–55.